



Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Legal Office, 3 West Road, Virks Building, 4th floor, Cranston, RI 02920
phone: 401.462.2326 fax: 401.462.1678

June 15, 2018

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman
House Committee on Oversight
101 State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RI Bridges system, which covers the reporting period May 15, 2018 – June 15, 2018. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement;
- DHS staffing and employee training;
- Pending applications;
- SNAP timeliness;
- CCAP off-cycle payments; and
- LTSS interim payments.

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve and your interest in the health of the RI Bridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Beane, Secretary



RI Bridges: Monthly Update

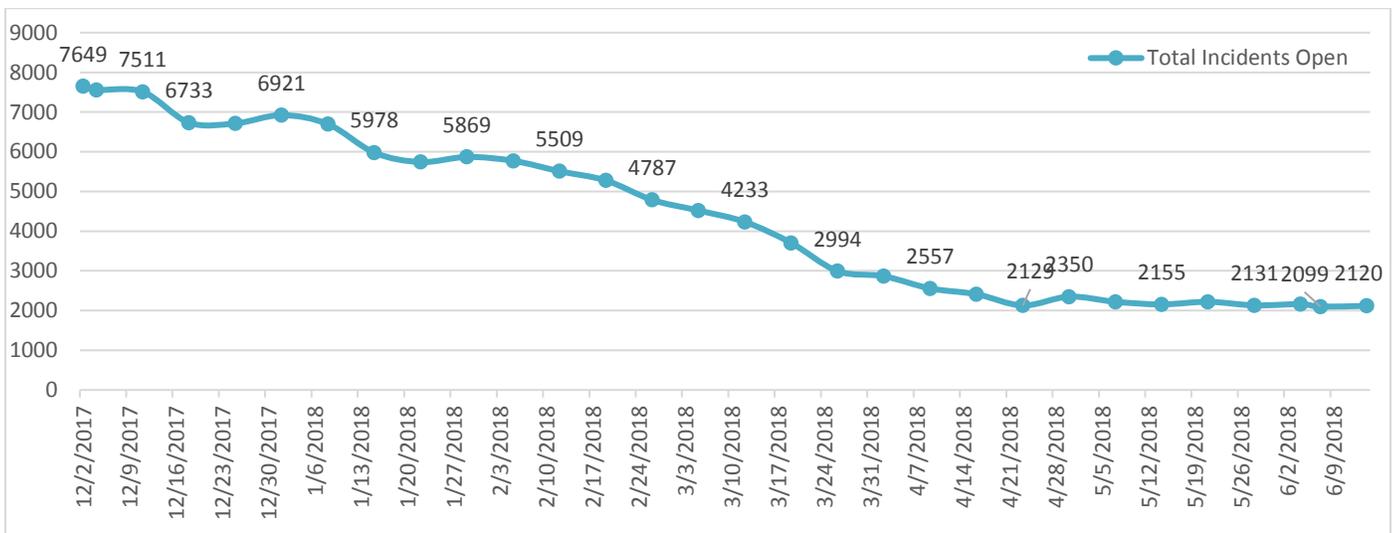
June 2018

The Executive Office of Health & Human Services coordinates and supports the delivery of programs and services across Rhode Island's health and human service agencies. Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life, and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of work on RI Bridges is an important part of the equation. We are not yet where we need to be with RI Bridges, but progress is being made.

The focus of the team has always been on ensuring Rhode Islanders have access to the benefits they deserve. This focus continues to drive our strategy, our commitment to operational improvement, and the prioritization used with Deloitte to develop and implement software fixes.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

An important measure of system health and stability is the total number of incidents logged related to the RI Bridges system. The number of new and existing incidents logged into RI Bridges has been declining steadily over the last several months. As of the end of May, open incidents totaled 2,120 – a 72 percent drop since December 2017.



During this reporting period, we have continued to make upgrades to the system, while continuing to heed the advice of IT leadership in holding Deloitte accountable to delivering all upgrades to the system with quality. We will continue to rigorously test software, and, if necessary, push back planned upgrades if there is the potential for them to compromise system performance.

While the State continues to press Deloitte to improve the system, we have also begun planning to re-bid the maintenance and operations (M&O) contract for RIBridges. Last February, the State went out to bid for an IT consultant to assist with M&O procurement. The selected vendor, Information Services Group, supported efforts to develop a M&O Request for Information (RFI), which was posted today. This RFI is the latest step in a comprehensive, deliberate process to ensure taxpayers are protected and the State contracts with an appropriate, qualified M&O vendor. Through the RFI, the State will seek information on best practices and approaches for M&O services.

DHS STAFFING + TRAINING



DHS continues to make progress in strengthening its workforce, with a focus on filling customer service aide (CSA), social case worker, and eligibility technician positions. Since May, DHS has hired 19 CSAs and has posted an additional 13 CSA positions. Social case worker vacancies also continue to be filled to assist the Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) unit of DHS. As of June 30, a new quality control reviewer, employment and career advisor, and three social case workers will begin work. In addition, 14 CSAs – who were hired in May 2018 – will be deployed to support field offices.

During this reporting period, eight new employees completed new-hire orientation. And a total of 328 DHS staff participated in system training, in preparation for upgrades to the RI Bridges’ worker portal. Staff also participated in LTSS and elderly, adult and disabled medical training during this period.

PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

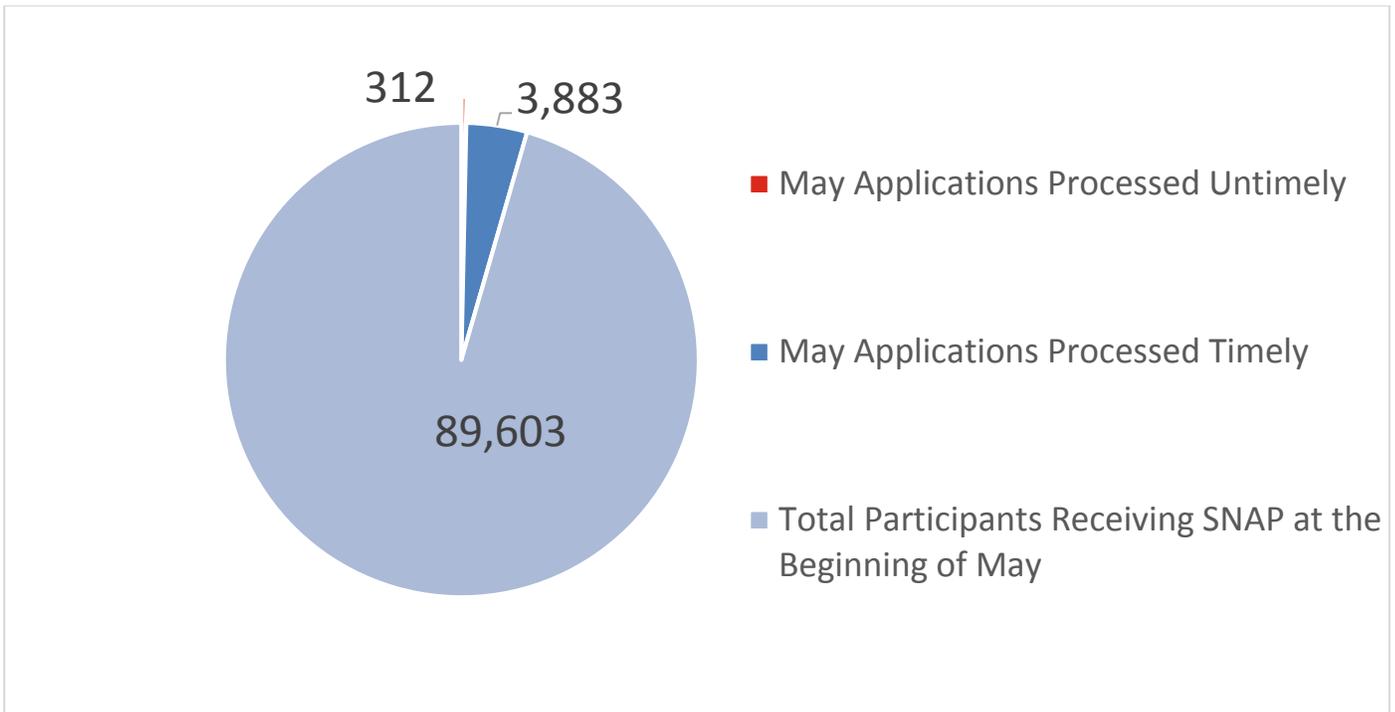
The number of pending new applications across all programs is under 5,000 – the result of the priority the State continues to place on ensuring access to benefits. Overdue pending applications awaiting State action total 1,509 – a 17% decrease month-over-month.

Program Name	Not Overdue			Overdue			Grand Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
SNAP Expedited	18	35	53	37	6	43	96
SNAP Non-Expedited	399	81	480	110	7	117	597
CCAP	28	86	114	19	12	31	145
GPA - Burial	0	2	2	0	11	11	13
SSP	0	11	11	0	14	14	25
GPA	63	20	83	128	41	169	252
RIW	142	70	212	44	30	74	286
Undetermined Cash	3	1	4	55	12	67	71
Undetermined Medical	3	152	155	65	349	414	569
MAGI	68	44	112	276	264	540	652
MPP	14	108	122	57	115	172	294
Complex Medicaid	36	63	99	81	262	343	442
LTSS	93	736	829	166	386	552	1,381
Grand Total	867	1,409	2,276	1,038	1,509	2,547	4,823

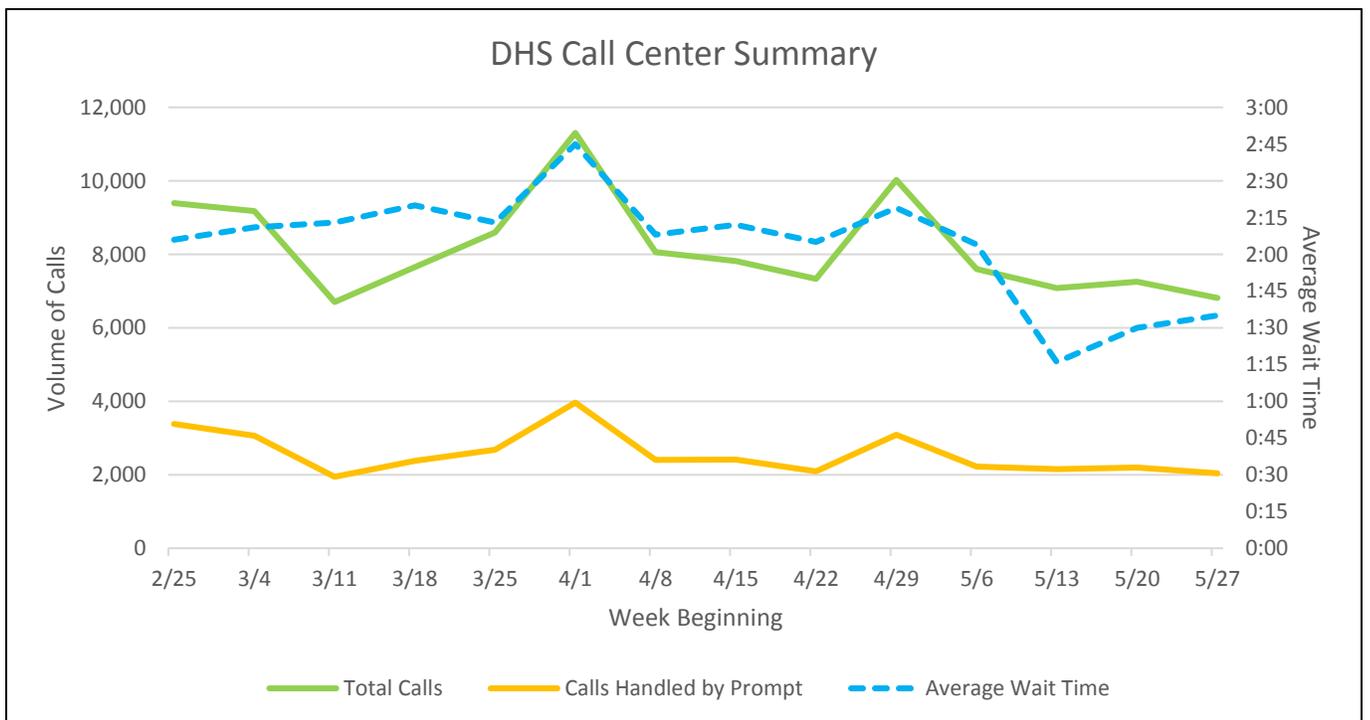
SNAP TIMELINESS + SPECIAL MASTER UPDATE

The State continues to improve SNAP timeliness, achieving 92.6 percent timeliness in May, up from 90 percent in April. In May, 3,883 Rhode Islanders received timely SNAP benefits. As of this submission, only 13 SNAP applications are overdue and pending State action. We anticipate a slight decline in timeliness for June as a result of the malware incident earlier this month, but remain committed to continued improvements in timeliness.





Although call center wait time is still too high, we see signs of progress. Call volume during the last week of May was approximately 7,000 calls, down from 11,000 in the beginning of April. This indicates that more Rhode Islanders have had their problems resolved, and therefore do not need to call the call center. Average wait time dropped nearly 45 minutes in May as well.



CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

See below for the total number of batch payments made to our child care providers.

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (24, 24A, 24b)	752	\$2.7 million
Off-Cycle (24A, 24B)	71	\$163,000
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	9.44%	N/A
Payments Off-Cycle/Total	5.98%	N/A

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (25, 25A, 25B)	764	\$2.8 million
Off-Cycle (21A, 21B)	68	\$69,000
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	8.9%	N/A
Payments Off-Cycle/Total	2.47%	N/A

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (26, 26A, 26B)	739	\$2.7 million
Off-Cycle (26A)	53	\$106,769
Providers Off-Cycle/Total	7.17%	N/A
Payments Off-Cycle/Total	3.96%	N/A

LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are 386 overdue LTSS applications pending state action. This is a 32% decrease month-over-month.

The State conducted a successful escalation pilot with three LTSS providers to better understand and resolve the issues experienced with payments and eligibility. To date, we have resolved 60 percent of the cases identified during this pilot. And we are now planning on expanding these escalation meetings to all LTSS providers.

This month, through the contingency payment process, which ensures nursing and assisted-living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, the State paid out \$2,544,088 (schedule attached). Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to meet regularly to review progress on the RI Bridges system and to secure federal funding through the standard Advance Planning Document (APD) process. Below is a list of federal correspondence during this reporting period, some of which are part of routine performance audits.

- On April 9, 2018, Special Master Sherman sent a letter to FNS, requesting approval of DHS' proposal to use an outside vendor to reduce call center wait times for SNAP applicants.
- On May 15, 2018, DHS sent a letter to FNS regarding its proposed Corrective Action Plan to further improve timely and accurate administration of SNAP benefits. The proposal is subject to FNS review and approval.
- On May 23, 2018, DHS received a SNAP Civil Rights Compliance Review document. This document is in relation to a 2014 DHS site visit and a follow up response from 2017.
- On May 24, 2018, FNS sent a letter to DHS approving the use of non-merit system personnel in the DHS

call center.

- On May 25, 2018, FNS sent a letter to DHS regarding SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).
- On June 1, 2018, FNS sent a letter to DHS granting approval of the State's sole source request for technical assistance support.
- On June 8, 2018, the Office of Policy, Research and Analysis sent a memo to DHS field staff regarding EBT Security Procedures, reflecting FNS' feedback in its May 25, 2018 letter.
- On June 8, 2018, we submitted our latest IAPD-U document to CMS and FNS. There was no budget increase proposed in this update.
- On June 14, 2018, FNS submitted a letter to DHS, announcing it will release the official SNAP FY2017 payment error rates by June 30, 2018.

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

- On June 4, 2018, the Court accepted the Special Master's 7th report.
- On June 15, 2018, the May 2018 SNAP Application Timeliness Report was submitted as part of the Gemmell agreement.

